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FROM: Karen Eisen, Natalie Ellis
SUBJECT: Marlboro Line Extension Qualitative Learning Topline

DATE: May 4, 1992

Groups were held in Los Angeles with male Marlboro and Camel smokers ages 18-34. The second half of these groups were devoted to Marlboro line extensions. Sample packaging was shown for RX, Royce and Marlboro Wides. In addition, prototype Wides product was available for smoking and Royce was demonstrated but not smoked.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The Wides concept continues to appeal to male Marlboro and Camel smokers. At least one smoker in each group had tried and liked Camel Wides, and those who had not tried it seemed intrigued by the idea of a wider cigarette. The communication of the advertising appears to be mixed. Several smokers in each group were unsure about the product difference. Some thought it was a wide pack holding 25 cigarettes. The "fat guy playing pool" visual was somewhat distant from the Joe Camel and seemed to suggest an older, heavier smoker. Camel Wides was sometimes described as a gimmick introduced in response to Marlboro Medium. In these groups, the benefits of Camel Wides did not appear to outweigh the taste/image preferences of Marlboro smokers

Trying the prototype Marlboro version sharply increased interest among Marlboro smokers. Mentions of flavor, draw, feel in hand and value were all positive. The primary benefits of the cigarette appears to be its masculine feel and satisfying draw while value is a more "logical" reason for buying. "X.L." was the near unanimous choice as a short, "catchy", descriptive name for the product. Importantly, it was considered different enough in sound and feel from "Wides" to avoid making the product seem like a copy of Camel. Men in all the groups were adamant that Marlboro should not respond to Camel with a "me too" product.

Royce had strong novelty appeal to the respondents. They were shown how the product would work and told that the price would work out to about a dollar a pack less than regular full margin price. At this level the both Marlboro and Camel smokers were very interested. They seemed to regard the procedure as fun rather than as a nuisance. The issues of whether this perception would continue in practice and the acceptability of the actual cigarette can't be measured in this research format. We strongly suggest an extended use test followed by qualitative research among the participants as a next step as soon as product is available.

RX continued to receive mixed reviews. The packs shown were well received and the concept of a Marlboro product at 30-40 cents less a pack was attractive. However, while some smokers appreciated the savings, others saw the concept primarily as a cigarette for lighter smokers or people trying to cut down. It was also seen as appropriate for hurried situations. When asked to choose the best idea from those shown, RX was rarely ranked first. The idea was also presented as 25 cigarettes for the price of twenty, but the respondents had a difficult time envisioning the product without packaging.

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